AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 12 without prejudice, and please amend claims 1, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 13 as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A stacker comprising:

a transfer device (4) for serially accommodating individual products (1) consecutively conveyed to ~~it~~ the transfer device (4) along their long axes,

wherein the transfer device (4) has receptacles (5), each of which accommodates an individual product (1) between a pair of sidewalls (6), wherein the sidewalls (6) are carried by a conveyor (7) at an acute angle and travel over an idler (10) that spreads the sidewalls (6) further apart to receive one of the products (1) that is inserted in each of the receptacles (5), and wherein the idler (10) is positioned intermediate two opposite ends of the conveyor (7) to divide the conveyor (7) into two sections with a slight bend around the idler (10) so as to close together the sidewalls (6) shortly after one of the products (1) has been inserted in one of the receptacles (5);

a serializing device for realigning individual products (1) coming from the transfer device (4) that are laid out flat next to one another such that their flat sides will be parallel and face one another; and

a row of compartments (11) for the products (1) that may be conveyed along a direction orthogonal to the flat sides of the products (1) being carried by the transfer device (4), wherein each such compartment (11) is

configured for accommodating at least one product (1).

2. (Original) A stacker according to claim 1, wherein the transfer device (4) is configured such that products (1) are decelerated and brought to a standstill between the serializing device's entrance and exit.

3 (Previously presented) A stacker according to claim 1, wherein the transfer device (4) is configured such that it gives products (1) a velocity component along the row of compartments' direction of travel.

4. (Previously presented) A stacker according to claim 1, wherein the transfer device (4) has receptacles (5), each of which accommodates a single product (1), where the receptacles (5) are transported at a constant rate that is less than the rate at which the products (1) are transported.

5. (Currently amended) A stacker according to claim 1 4, wherein the receptacles change their shape before, or after, they receive an item (1).

6. (Previously presented) A stacker according to claim 4, wherein each receptacle has a pair of sidewalls (6) and every sidewall (6) is common to adjacent receptacles (5).

7. (Currently amended) A stacker according to claim 6, wherein the included angle between the pair of sidewalls (6) of a receptacle (5) is increased prior to a product (1) being accommodated in that receptacle (5) and~~/or~~ the included angle between its pair of sidewalls (6) is decreased after a product (1) has been accommodated in the receptacle (5).

8. (Previously presented) A stacker according to claim 4, wherein the receptacles (5), or their sidewalls (6), are attached to a circulating conveyor (7).

9. (Currently amended) A stacker according to claim 8, wherein the circulating conveyor (7) has a bend around the idler (8) for opening and closing the receptacle (5).

10. (Currently amended) A stacker according to claim 1 ~~any of the foregoing claims~~, wherein a serializing device has a stop (15) for the leading edges (14) of products (1).

11. (Previously presented) A stacker according to claim 10, wherein the stop (15) is configured such that it has fixed location.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently amended) A stacker according to claim 10 ~~12~~, wherein the stop (15) is formed from a component of the compartments (11) of the row of compartments.

14. (Previously presented) A stacker according to claim 1, wherein the compartments (11) are formed between pairs of compartment walls (12).

15. (Previously presented) A stacker according to claim 1, wherein the compartment (11) that is currently being loaded by the transfer device (4) is opened and subsequently closed.

16. (Original) A stacker according to claim 15, wherein the opening of the compartment (11) is effected by tilting the trailing compartment wall (12a).

17. (Previously presented) A stacker according to claim 1, wherein the compartment (11), or the compartment walls (12), are attached to a circulating conveyor (13).

18. (Previously presented) A stacker according to claim 16, wherein the conveyor (13) is deflected in order to tilt the compartment walls (12a).